# 04 Marketing and Stakeholder Management

Trainee Manual Part 2

# Introduction to the Training Program

## INTRODUCTION TO THE TRAINING PROGRAM

This is the trainee manual for Module 4 Part 2 – out of 11 modules in total - of *info*Dev's State-of-the-Art Business Incubation Training Program for Business Incubator Managers in Developing Countries.

*info*Dev (www.infodev.org) is a research, capacity building and advisory services program, coordinated and served by an expert Secretariat hosted by the World Bank Group. It helps developing countries and their international partners use innovation and information and communication technologies (ICT) effectively as tools for poverty reduction and sustainable social and economic development. *info*Dev is a leader in business incubation of technology-enabled enterprises. *info*Dev's global business incubation network reaches close to 300 business incubators, more than 20,000 small and medium enterprises, and has helped create over 200,000 jobs across 87 developing countries.[1]

*info*Dev has found that high quality leadership is a key factor determining the probability of success for an incubator. *info*Dev therefore seeks to increase the capacity of business incubation managers – and their stakeholders – through one-on-one technical assistance, regional and topical peer-to-peer networks, the bi-annual Global Forum on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and its web-based networking and knowledge-sharing tool www.idisc.net. This training program was designed in direct response to repeated requests from *info*Dev's technology entrepreneurship community for an in-depth business incubation training program relevant to the developing country context.

This training program is the first-of-its-kind, drawing from the lessons, models, and examples in business incubation from across Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, and South Asia. More than 30 experts contributed directly to the writing of the training modules, and the materials were tested with more than 300 professionals in developing countries all of whom provided inputs to the final design.

This training program is designed for business incubation managers and other business incubation stakeholders wishing to increase their understanding and know-how of the business incubation process. It consists of 11 training modules ranging from basic introductory topics designed for professionals new to business incubation, to specialized topics such as Technology Commercialization and Virtual Business Incubation Services.

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[1] Source: *info*Dev activities from 2002 to 2009 - http://www.infodev.org/en/Article.473.html

The modules include:

## SUITE 1 – BUSINESS INCUBATION BASICS

### Module 1 – Business Incubation Definitions and Principles

This module provides an introduction to business incubation. It introduces key definitions and presents the main principles and good practices of business incubation. It aims to equip current and future incubator managers and policy makers with the knowledge, skills and understanding of the fundamentals of business incubation in order to effectively foster and encourage businesses.

### Module 2 – Business Incubator Models, Including Success Factors

This module aims to illustrate various business incubator models based on practical examples of incubators from all over the world. The ultimate goal of this module is to empower current and future incubator managers with a thorough understanding of the various business incubator models and their critical success factors as well as to help them identify the best model to adopt for their own incubator to be successful.

## SUITE 2 – BUSINESS INCUBATOR OPERATIONS

### Module 3 – Planning an Incubator

This module, which divided in two parts, covers assessing the feasibility and designing the business model for an incubator. The first part is aimed at providing a thorough understanding of developing a feasibility study. This includes the steps to undertake a pre-feasibility study, the components that it should address, as well as how to gauge the market need and decide whether an incubator is the most appropriate solution. The second part of the module focuses on business planning to establish the incubator business model.

### Module 4 – Marketing and Stakeholder Management

This module is designed to support efficient and effective communication of the incubator with key customers and other stakeholders based on a good understanding of the market place. This is important since it will help the incubator to establish and increase its reputation as a sustainable organization that fulfils its mission.

The first part of the module focuses on identifying, assessing, and reaching customers/ stakeholders, as well as potential ally organizations providing business support services to enterprises; while the second part is dedicated to defining the incubator's value proposition and engaging marketing channels.

### Module 5 – Financing an Incubator

The first part of this module aims to guide current and future business incubator managers through mastering the incubator's financial data (such as costs and revenues) in order to enable them to identify the financing needs of the organization as well as to explore potential sources of financing.

Building on the first part, the second part of the module is dedicated to demonstrating, to current

and future business incubator managers, how to develop a fundraising strategy and to monitor the financial performance of an incubator.

**Module 6 – Managing the Incubator**

This module provides current and future business incubator managers with an overview of sound management practices for a successful incubator.

The first part addresses the topics of incubator policies and governance and the second part is dedicated to operations and human resources management.

**Module 7 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Benchmarking**

This module aims to provide incubator managers with the required information, skills and insights to develop their own monitoring and evaluation system and to carry out benchmarking activities.

The first part of the module is dedicated to helping the incubator manager understand the added value of monitoring and evaluating the performances of his/her incubator; defining relevant and adequate performance indicators; and exploring how to monitor and evaluate, notably by studying existing tools and methodologies.

The second part focuses on empowering the business incubator manager to use the data collected through monitoring and evaluation activities to compare the business incubator's performance with those of similar organizations.

<div style="background:red;color:white">SUITE 3 – ADVANCED INCUBATOR MANAGEMENT</div>

**Module 8 – Implementing a Mentoring Program**

This module provides, in its first part, a conceptual framework for gaining a thorough understanding of the mentoring process and its purposes from three perspectives: that of the business incubator, the mentor, and the mentee.

The second part of the module focuses on how to implement a mentoring program.

**Module 9 – Deals and Financing for Incubator Clients**

This module aims to provide a thorough understanding of the alternative sources of financing for incubator clients by notably describing programs and processes that will enable the incubator manager to assist his/her clients in accessing financing.

The first part focuses on preparing incubatees to engage in the process of accessing financing while developing the capacity of the incubator to assist incubatees in accessing financing. The second part of the training module explores financing from the perspective of both the incubatees and the incubator.

**Module 10 – Technology Commercialization through Incubation**

This module describes technology commercialization divided in two parts. The first relating to

challenges and lessons learned associated with this process as well as how to manage expectations regarding the results of technology commercialization. This part also concerns the role of the incubator in facilitating technology commercialization in the pre-incubation phase.

The second part of this module focuses on the role of the incubator in technology commercialization in both the incubation and the growth phases.

**Module 11 – Setting Up Virtual Services**
The first part of this module provides a conceptual framework for understanding virtual services. It is designed for current and future business incubator managers who are considering virtual incubation either as a stand-alone business model or as part of their overall incubator service portfolio to extend their current service offering.

In its second part, the module aims to guide current and future business incubator managers and help them to decide if virtual incubation is the right solution for their incubator. The module then explores the most common challenges and how to address them.

Figure 1 groups the modules by preferred level of experience and suggested module sequence.
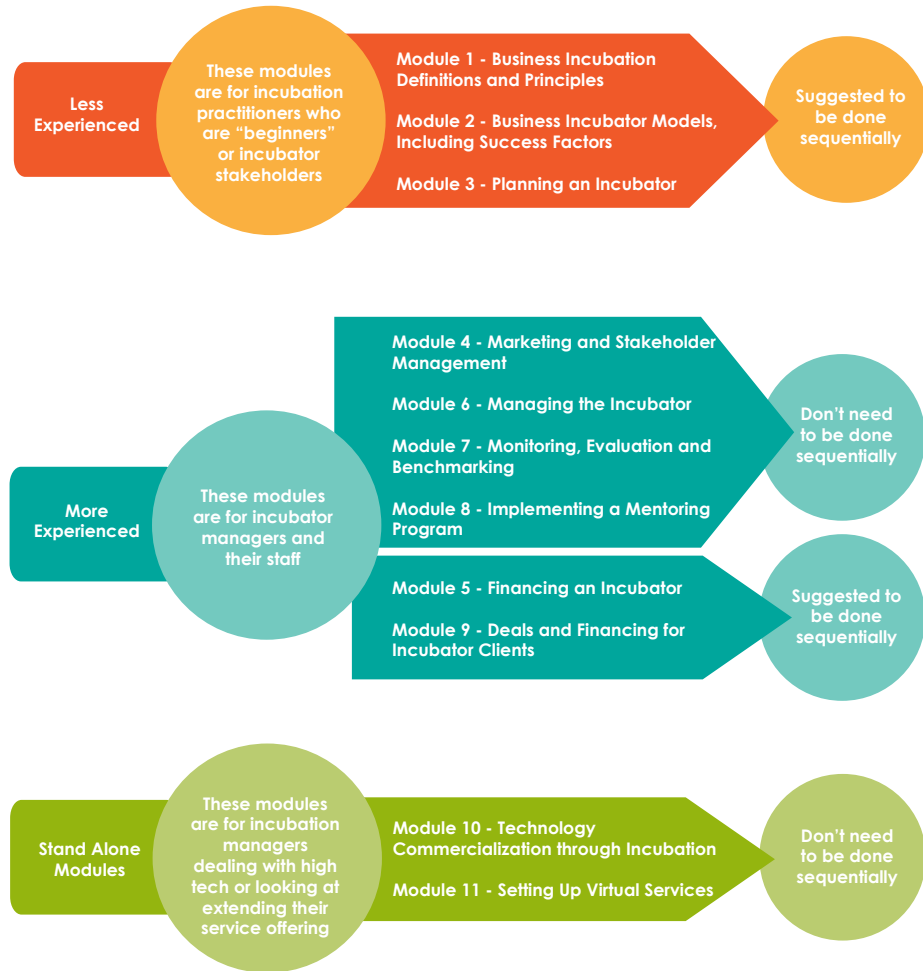
**Figure 1 – Module Selection and Sequence**

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# Module Index

## TABLES AND FIGURES

# Module Objectives

The overarching objective of this module is to support the incubator in efficient and effective communication with key customers and other stakeholders based on a good understanding of the market place. This is important since it will help the incubator to establish and increase its reputation as a sustainable organization that fulfils its mission.

The first part of the module focuses on identifying, assessing, and reaching customers / stakeholders, as well as potential ally organizations providing business support services to enterprises, while the second part is dedicated to defining the incubator's value proposition and engaging marketing channels.

<div style="background-color:red;color:white;">TRAINEE TRAINING OBJECTIVES</div>

As a result of completing this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify key customers that will provide the financial resources necessary to sustain the incubator as a viable enterprise;

- Identify additional stakeholders that must be engaged if the incubator is to fulfill its mission;

- Assess the customer and stakeholder needs that must be met to attract and ensure a long-term and successful relationship between them and the incubator;

- Recognize and assess other organizations serving the same customers;

- Determine how the incubator can complement rather than compete with other organizations serving the same customers;

- Define the incubator's "value proposition", with appropriate modifications for different audiences, and ensure that the tactical marketing components support this value proposition; and

- Identify the channels through which the incubator can convey its marketing messages and understand how to use them.

# Introduction to this Module

Incubator managers have limited resources for running the incubator. Often, the operating budget does not allow them to use the services of a professional marketing consultant or executive, let alone a marketing firm. Furthermore, every hour the incubator manager and staff spend on marketing is one less hour spent helping incubatees start-up, survive and succeed. The following module will provide trainees with an appreciation of the value and purpose of marketing in the incubator context and guide them with regard to the most important aspects to consider. In this way, they will be able to focus the resources available to them, and better direct their marketing activities at attracting and retaining the customers and stakeholders necessary for the incubator to become a sustainable enterprise and to deliver on its mission. Marketing has to be considered as an integral part of the incubator's business plan.

McCarthy and Perreault define marketing as follows: "the aim of marketing is to identify customers' needs – and meet those needs so well that the product almost 'sells itself'….. Marketing should begin with potential customer needs – not with the production process. Marketing should try to anticipate needs. And then marketing, rather than production, should determine what goods and services are to be developed – including decisions about product design and packaging; prices or fees; credit and collection policies; use of middlemen; transporting and storing policies; advertising and sales policies; and, after the sale, installation, customer service, warranty, and perhaps even disposal policies. This does not mean that marketing should try to take over production, accounting, and financial activities. Rather, it means that marketing – by interpreting customers' needs – should provide direction for these activities and try to coordinate them. After all, the purpose of a business or nonprofit organization is to satisfy customer or client needs. It is not to supply goods and services that are convenient to produce and might sell or be accepted free".[2]

Considering the above definition, marketing is a comprehensive process to get the product/service to the market and thereby satisfy a client need. The process includes indentifying the potential customer needs, aligning the products and services of the incubator to address these needs, and developing and maintaining a relationship with the customer to stay abreast of the needs. Even the small tasks like writing thank-you letters, socializing with clients or returning calls promptly can be thought of as marketing.

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[2] Source: McCarthy, E.J.; Perreault, W. E. Jr;  Basic Marketing, 11th ed; Irwin, Boston, 1993; p 9

Component 1 presents different aspects of marketing as it relates to business incubators following a logical progression starting with identifying the customer.[3] The component identifies the types of customers as they relate to each incubator stage of development. It then addresses the importance of identifying stakeholders[4] who may not contribute financially, but may provide non-cash value that is critical to the success of the incubator. Once the customers and stakeholders are identified a focus is placed on determining and meeting the needs of these individuals / organizations emphasizing the necessity for an incubator manager to remain attentive to the expectations of the customers and stakeholders.

Further critical aspects of marketing as it relates to incubators are also discussed which include the importance of understanding the needs of the potential incubatees and the potential financial contributions from a sponsorship and incubatee perspective. The component closes with a detailed discussion on how to meet an incubator's marketing objectives through applying the 7 P's.

Component 2 discusses the importance of identifying and assessing organizations and individuals that are supplying comparable services and have similar clients. As addressed by the component, the challenge is turning potential competitors into constructive complementing organizations and individuals.

Component 3 focuses on how to define the incubator's "value proposition", which relates strongly to the key points of components 1 and 2, re-emphasizing the importance of clearly understanding the customer need and the incubator's potential role. This leads to the final component, Component 4, that addresses how an incubator manager can properly promote the incubator and its value proposition.

Component 4 discusses various channels that can be utilized to promote the incubator, which include networking, testimonials, entrepreneurship days and publications. The component provides helpful guidelines to maximize the impact of these promotional channels in order to ensure the incubator's management team is effective and efficient at promoting the incubator.

Through developing an understanding of the main aspects of marketing as conveyed by the module components, the trainee will be in a better position to attract and retain the customers and stakeholders needed for a sustainable incubator that delivers on its mission and graduates successful companies.

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[3] Note: For the sake of clarity, in this module we will assume that customers are those individuals and organizations that provide the cash flow to the incubator, which allows the incubator to cover its costs of operation and thereby to sustain itself as an enterprise.

[4] Note: Those individuals and organizations that contribute non-financial value to the incubator that helps the incubator fulfill its mission will be considered to be "other stakeholders."

# Component 3
# (Part 2 Training):

# Defining The Incubator Value
# Proposition(s)

## COMPONENT INDEX

**Section 3.1.:** Define the Incubator "Value Proposition"

Note: Component 3 only has one section, which focuses entirely on the need to develop clear and compelling value propositions. The primary value proposition will address the overarching mission to serve entrepreneurs in the pre-venture, start-up, survival and early growth stages. However, the incubator will most likely need to develop somewhat different, but complementary, value propositions for other stakeholders.

## COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

This component is designed to ensure that trainer and trainees share a common understanding of the concept of the value proposition and how to communicate it adequately to customers and stakeholders.

At the end of this component, trainees should be able to:

- Understand the role of the value proposition in marketing ;

- Create and verbalize the core value proposition; and

- Extend the core value proposition in order to customize it for different audiences.

# Section 3.1: Define the Incubator "Value Proposition"

Defining the incubator value proposition is a strategic task that starts by identifying the customers and other stakeholders to whom the incubator intends to deliver value. Then the incubator needs to develop a clear understanding of what needs its customers and other stakeholders expect or hope that the incubator can meet. After this, the incubator should determine which of the needs can be adequately met within the resource constraints and the business model of the incubator, and how the incubator will deliver the value that comes with meeting these particular needs.

**In essence the value proposition should answer:**

- What value will be delivered;
- To whom; and
- In what way will it be delivered?

The value proposition must be integrated into the overall business plan of the incubator. The value that will be delivered can be expressed in terms of the benefits delivered to and received by the incubatees, whereas the description of the specific services provided by the incubator and its extended network are the features of the incubation process.

The customers and stakeholders who are targets for the incubator value proposition, and their needs, have been discussed in Components 1 and 2. Hence, this section will focus on what value will be delivered and how this will be accomplished.

The mission statement of most incubators has at its core a commitment to helping entrepreneurs start and grow their ventures resulting in survival, sustainability and success. In a very general sense, this highlights the value that the incubator proposes to deliver and to whom. (The aspects related to vision and mission statements are studied in greater detail in Module 3 of the training program, "Planning an Incubator").

For all audiences, irrespective of the media used, this core mission, and the value proposition, needs to be communicated in a clear, concise, crisp and compelling manner. It is frequently the case that there are additional aspects included in the value proposition that may reflect the needs of sponsors.

**The additional aspects to be addressed in the value proposition might include some or all of the following:**

• Development of the workforce (in the case of sponsorship by a government agency), including but not limited to specific segments of the workforce, such as displaced workers, women, minorities and so forth;

• Enhancing technology transfer (in the case of sponsorship by government, corporate bodies and universities);

• Supporting the educational and research mission of a university sponsor;

• Collaborating with other organizations who are supporting economic development by providing services to entrepreneurs;

• Internationalization of incubatees; and

• Promoting the area to encourage entrepreneurs and investors to start up their business in the region.

The incubator needs to be wary of mission "creep", which is permitting the mission to become too comprehensive and unwieldy and trying to address the interests of too many groups. If this happens, the value proposition will encompass more than the incubator can deliver and hence the incubator risks failing to deliver adequately on its value proposition. Ideally the secondary aspects included in the mission are aligned with and support the core mission. If the needs of a prospective customer or other stakeholder cannot be met through delivery of the incubator's value proposition, then generally it would be best if the incubator does not include that organization in its portfolio of customers and other stakeholders.

Though the core value proposition may need to be customized to local conditions, its essence is to help entrepreneurs overcome deficiencies and address key success factors in order to increase the probability of success for each individual incubatee, and to create significant impact through the overall performance of the portfolio of incubatees.

**Examples of how value may be delivered include:**

• Most incubators provide counseling in a variety of forms and on a variety of topics through the incubator staff or by the extended network of the incubator and also on an ad hoc, just-in-time basis or on the basis of periodic and routine reporting and feedback sessions.

• Most incubators develop an extended network and are adept at facilitating connections to this network for incubatees, other customers and other stakeholders seeking knowledge, capabilities, resources and so forth on an ad hoc, just-in-time basis or through periodic and routine networking meetings sponsored by the incubator and/ or its complementors designed to connect incubatees to participants in the extended incubator network.

• Most incubators create a community and facilitate a dynamic environment in which incubatees can learn from each other.

• Most incubators provide training to increase knowledge and skills of incubatees through their own management teams; through their extended networks; and/ or through their relationships with complementors and collaborators.

These are the general features of the incubation process. These general features of business incubation are further specified through the variety of customized programs and processes expressed in the local context that enable the incubator to deliver the benefits incubatees need and demand.

**Some examples of the benefits that can be delivered by the incubator to address specific incubatee needs are provided below:**

Services
- Reception;

- Market research;

- Development of a marketing strategy and implementation plan;

- Business strategy development, including business model refinement;

- Assistance in setting up a production line;

- Identification of, and connection to, early adopter customers;

- Development of marketing materials;

- Website development;

- Access to financial resources and services;

- Access to expertise, such as IP, contract law, tax law, accounting, and so forth;

- Development of an advisory board;

- Identification and recruitment of additional partners or key employees;

- Negotiations with investors, suppliers and customers;

- Co-branding opportunities;

- Security;

- Establishment of managerial systems for general business operations; and

- Internationalization and export assistance.

Infrastructure
- Access to product prototyping equipment;

- Access to  a Communications and IT infrastructure; and

- Access to facilities in which the incubatee can operate – including offices, meeting rooms, production facilities and R&D facilities.

Note: These are discussed in greater detail in the other modules of the training program.

## COMPONENT CONCLUSIONS

The incubator needs to communicate with relevant stakeholders (on paper, through electronic media, and in verbal presentations) in a manner that clearly present the core value proposition, appropriate secondary and complementary components of the value proposition that permit customization for the particular audience, and the programs and services through which the value proposition is delivered. In order to enhance the effectiveness of its communication, the incubator will need to take into consideration: choosing a name, logo, tagline and key graphical images; the design of promotional materials and websites; and so forth. Given the limitations of time and financial resources, the incubator can often benefit from the brand, the corporate identity and the marketing strategies of its sponsors. In addition, the incubator advisory board and the extended network should include marketing professionals who can assist and guide the incubator manager in developing an effective marketing strategy.

# Component 4
# (Part 2 Training):

# Identifying and Engaging
# Promotion Channels

## COMPONENT INDEX

**Section 4.1:** Identify the Channels through which the Incubator Can Convey its Promotional Messages and Understand How to Use Them

**Section 4.1.1:** Networking

**Section 4.1.2:** Internet

**Section 4.1.3:** Testimonials

**Section 4.1.4:** Training Seminars

**Section 4.1.5:** Conferences and Trade Shows

**Section 4.1.6:** Entrepreneurship Days, Awards Events and Competitions

**Section 4.1.7:** Public Relations

**Section 4.1.8:** Publications

**Section 4.1.9:** Maximize Impact of Promotion Channels

Note: As was the case for Component 3, this component has one section entirely focused on an in-depth discussion of promotion channels incubators can use to reach customers and other stakeholders.

## COMPONENT OBJECTIVES

This component is designed to ensure that the trainer and trainees have a wide knowledge of the entire range of communication channels through which the incubator can convey its promotional messages, and how to use them.

At the end of this component, trainees should be able to:

• Assess the local media and identify appropriate channels for the incubator's messages;

• Prioritize the channels with respect to return on investment of time and achieving the incubator mission; and

• Determine what additional communication channels the incubator needs to develop and manage that will complement the external channels.

# Section 4.1: Identify the Channels through which the Incubator Can Convey its Promotional Messages and Understand How to Use Them

Given that most incubators have limited financial resources, it is assumed that except in rare circumstances the incubator will not be communicating through paid advertising. The exceptions might include paying for a small ad in a program brochure for a gala honoring a key sponsor of the incubator. Even in this case, the incubator manager might be well-advised to ask a member of the incubator advisory board to pay for the advertisement.

The old adage states that the best advertising is free. However even "free advertising" often referred to as PR or public relations, is typically not free, as it often requires that the incubator manager invests time in making the PR happen. Hence, the incubator manager needs to determine how much effort, time, and resources can and should be invested in promotional communications and how to achieve the greatest return on investment. The following sections cover communication channels that are most commonly used by incubators.

### Section 4.1.1: Networking

In order to build the incubator's extended network and to identify potential incubatees, no channel is more productive than networking, assuming the incubator manager is skilful in conducting this activity and dedicates sufficient time to it. Since this is very important, the incubator manager selection criteria should include networking skills and a passion for networking.

How does networking occur? In many ways, for example through:

- Ad hoc and routine outreach to key members of the incubator network via email, mail, phone and face-to-face meetings;

- Presentations at meetings of the organizations in the incubator's ecosystem;

- Networking events sponsored by the incubator and/ or other stakeholders;

- Tours of the incubator; and

- Business plan competitions.

The SME Toolkit provides tips on "How to Network Efficiently".[8]

International networking is of fundamental importance to the business incubator.

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[8] Source : International Finance Corporation, SMEToolkit:

http://www.smetoolkit.org/smetoolkit/en/content/en/894/How-to-Network-Effectively

> **There are two key dimensions to international networking within an incubation context:**
>
> • The continuing professional development of incubator staff and learning from best practice; and
>
> • The establishment of alliances with internationally located incubators to support the growth of tenant businesses.

In undertaking international networking for business incubation, it is assumed that the incubator will have already established networking relationships on a regional or national basis either informally through established relationships or through formal incubator or business support associations. The international dimension is, therefore, seeking additional new inputs and collaborations.

International incubation associations may be located within a global region. For example, the *info*Dev network[9] represents the regions of Europe and Central Asia, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. As such, this network will provide access to a range of incubators that will have a relatively similar cultural background, business approach and management structures. Other associations include the European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN)[10] and the United States based National Business Incubation Association (NBIA)[11], which are membership (normally fee) based with the members being incubator organizations and related service providers. The respective associations will have differing eligibility criteria and membership fees.

All associations provide a generic range of services that can be accessed including incubator/business news, links, association hosted events including conferences, training programs and best practice exchanges. Online information will include latest articles and news relating to leadership and management, marketing and sales, operations, office space infrastructure and services and strategy.

Linking to such associations can help to realize project developments that will support the exploration of existing good practice, new processes and approaches for business incubation. These projects are normally developed through national and international funding sources, such as the World Bank and European Commission that will help to establish and bring together project partnerships.

Establishing alliances with internationally based incubators to support the growth of tenants is the second dimension of international networking. Organizations including the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA) and the United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) have established international "Soft Landing Zone" networks that support companies to expand into international markets.

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[9] *info*Dev: http://www.idisc.net/en/IncubatorsMap.html#

[10] Source: European Business & Innovation Centre Network: http://www.ebn.be/

[11] Source: National Business Incubation Association: http://www.nbia.org/

The available services through "soft landing zone" incubators varies, but they typically include desk space in a dedicated office complete with IT services, telephone answering and post forwarding. Businesses signing up to programs would also be able to take advantage of a number of support services.  Each company may be allocated a dedicated business support officer to ask advice from or call on for expertise on all legal, financial, cultural and practical issues of doing business in a particular country.

One example of a company taking advantage of the Soft Landing Zone Concept is PIXELearning[12], a highly innovative 'serious games' company that specialises in applying computer game / simulation approaches to business education, vocational and management skills development. PIXELearning Managing Director, Mr Kevin Corti, says, *"The Soft Landing Zone program has helped our business explore new international markets and has the potential to facilitate international collaborations across the globe – it's also great to gain an office address in several new countries!"* Mr. Corti added, *"We have already travelled to India, with the support of the program, and identified several potential customers and resellers as well as secured an outsourced development team in Calcutta. The program is an extremely cost-efficient way for small companies to establish an overseas sales presence and takes away much of the practical difficulties of being able to operate, both physically and virtually, overseas."*

### Section 4.1.2: Internet

Increasingly, in most parts of the world, individuals and organizations are using the Internet to publicize key promotional messages to target audiences who use search engines.

For an incubator, having its own website and being featured on its partners' sites is an effective way to promote its activities. Email campaigns and electronic newsletters can be very cost-effective, since the vast majority of today's organizations providing services to entrepreneurs can be reached online.

In addition, it may be important for the incubator to participate in the online social and business networks to increase the incubator's interactions with a community, such as social networks, blogs, and chat rooms.

However, it is also true that engagement in this world can be all-consuming, particularly due to the fact that these social and business networks can be easily accessible from anywhere through smart phones for example. Therefore, the incubator manager needs to carefully assess the return on investment. Indeed, blogs must only be proposed if the incubator manager can ensure an ongoing participation from the community members. Outdated blog posts on an incubator's website give a bad impression of an outdated, useless website.

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[12] Source: PIXELearning: http://www.pixelearning.com/

The SME Toolkit provides a very user-friendly and helpful on-line workshop on the basics to "Develop your Website Marketing Plan"[13] within the section which explores the Email and Web Marketing.[14]

**Keep your website simple and practical so that it is user-friendly. It could include some of the following elements:**

- Background information & benefits for entrepreneurs;

- Quality photographs of the incubator's facilities and a video tour;

- Display of the incubator's layout highlighting conducive floor plans;[15]

- A directory of services;

- A description and schedule of upcoming events;

- Who's who – profiles of the incubator's team;

- A list of the Board of Directors;

- An application form to join the incubator, if applicable;

- A directory of tenants;

- Full contact details and information;

- Links to useful information sources;

- "Testing for entrepreneurial aptitude" test; and

- Blogs etc.

[13] Source: International Finance Corporation, SMEToolkit – Develop your website marketing plan:

http://www.smetoolkit.org/smetoolkit/en/content/en/551/Develop-Your-Web-Site-Marketing-Plan

[14] Source: International Finance Corporation, SMEToolkit – Email, Web Marketing:

http://www.smetoolkit.org/smetoolkit/en/category/950/Email-Web-Marketing

[15] Note: For an example of good conducive floor plans, refer to the Feasibility Study Power Point presentation of the ICT Center and business incubator in Maputo, Mozambique: http://www.idisc.net/en/Article.38627.html

**You can enhance the attractiveness of your website and increase traffic by adopting some of the following strategies.**

• Downloads: More than reading about you, users are rather interested in what you can do for them. Make sure you include downloadable material, useful documents and references, links to websites of interest. Make it active and interactive. Also include your latest press releases or news articles, newsletter & brochure in downloadable format, business plan templates, case studies, loan / fund applications to partner institutions and other forms of entrepreneurial online support.

• Identify ways to keep visitors coming back, such as by offering some virtual services free of charge if possible or include a CV bank which can match job applicants with tenants' hiring requirements and allow for a space where you or your tenants can advertise available jobs. Since one of the incubator's underlying missions is to promote job creation, such activities can reinforce it. Also job seekers make great prospect entrepreneurs.

• Think about which other websites could include a link to your website. This will increase traffic to your website especially if the links are placed with relevant partner or sponsor organizations with which you share similar mission or objectives, and will also boost your ranking in search engines.

• Visitors' emails: Make sure you get your visitors' emails. Include a registration process to capture visitor information, but do not make it too cumbersome.

• Consider Search Engine Optimization (SEO) through a professional provider or one of your tenants if possible. This could be money well spent. Get a Google Ad Words account to enhance your visibility. Your ultimate aim would be to appear on the first page in Google search results, such as those among the top 10 results. Before choosing an online marketing consulting firm, look it up in search engines. If it does not appear on the first page, it may not make good on its promise.

• Include a tenant's section where incubatees can log in to get private information such as a welcome guide, tenants' directory, list of rules and regulations, free downloadable software, application forms for funding, and so forth.

The standards and common practices related to the design and creation of content for websites has been changing rapidly. It is very important for the incubator to have an effective website, and for the incubator to engage with web designers with current expertise. The challenges associated with maintaining and refreshing a website require that the site be simple and its size be limited. More information is available in Section 4.1.9 looking at how best to select what information should go online.

Note: Module 11 from the current training program, "Setting up Virtual Services", dedicates a comprehensive introduction to Web 2.0 Tools available to raise the profile of incubators among their stakeholders and customers in order to serve them better and go beyond developing and maintaining an attractive website.

### Section 4.1.3: Testimonials

Testimonials are very effective means to publicize, promote and advertise an incubator. Potential customers and other stakeholders are more likely to engage with the incubator because a friend or associate recommended it rather than in response to a billboard. Current customers and other stakeholders who are enthusiastic about the incubator's services and programs will most likely be happy to provide a testimonial, if asked. Success stories from satisfied customers and stakeholders can be showcased in networking and recognition brochures, on websites, and in articles published in various media outlets.

### Section 4.1.4: Training Seminars

Training seminars organized within the incubator, or by a complementing organization in partnership with the incubator, can be useful not only in developing knowledge and skills for participants, but they can also be effective channels for promotional communications targeted at existing and potential incubatees and other customers and stakeholders. They provide a forum in which the incubator can explain and promote the value of the incubator's services, not just the current training seminar. Effective engagement with co-sponsors and presenters is also a way to reinforce and strengthen ties between the incubator and its individual and organizational supporters.

### Section 4.1.5: Conferences and Trade Shows

Generally most incubators do not have the financial resources to participate as an exhibitor. However, it is possible that an incubator sponsor or other stakeholder may have a booth and may allow the incubator to participate as a showcased partner of the organization sponsoring the booth. In addition, the incubator may be able to gain visibility by serving on one of the organizing committees; by making a pro-bono presentation; or by serving as the facilitator of a session. It is recommended that managers follow up immediately on the most promising leads, which is an important point that many exhibitors disregard. To be adequately prepared for trade shows, it may be worth exploring the Trade Show section of the SME Toolkit, which provides very useful information.[16]

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[16] Source: International Finance Corporation, SMEToolkit  - Trade Shows:

http://www.smetoolkit.org/smetoolkit/en/category/956/Trade-Shows

### Section 4.1.6: Entrepreneurship Days, Awards Events and Competitions

Running entrepreneurship days (affording current incubatees an opportunity to showcase their products and services), awards, competition initiatives and incubate graduation events can be a productive way of promoting an incubator and attracting new incubatees and other stakeholders. These events can generate a powerful and positive emotional response among participants and enhance the enthusiasm for participation in the incubator ecosystem. Given the budget constraints of the typical incubator, it is ideal if the event can be conducted with the support of one or more sponsors who can cover significant costs related to putting on the event, promoting it, and providing recognition awards and prizes. Typically competitions provide participants with the opportunity of accessing grant money, or free services that can be provided by the incubator, its sponsors and/or other stakeholders.

Entrepreneurship days, awards and competitions also allow for a tremendous amount of outreach before, during and after the events. They are often effective ways to engage the media and to gain free publicity.

### Section 4.1.7: Public Relations

Public relations can be an incubator's "best friend". Unpaid advertising can be one of the most powerful forms of promotion, as long as there is credibility in the message. The best place to start is cultivating writers, editors, and publishers in the traditional and on-line media. Compile a list of all media organizations that you believe are of interest to your organization with the appropriate contact person at each, usually the news editor and/ or a particular journalist. Be careful not to overlook trade publications, online news providers and publications aimed at entrepreneurs/entrepreneurship, such as the Entrepreneur[17], for example. Make sure to include local and international news wire offices. Contact persons change regularly, so make sure you keep this information up to date. For tips related to press releases, the SME Toolkit has developed some useful "How to Articles" and is available under the "Public Relations" section of the website.[18]

It is appropriate and useful to schedule periodic media tours in which you attempt to arrange short meetings with a variety of media representatives. It is also appropriate to contact the most relevant media organizations and invite them to visit your incubator. Start by learning about their interests and the way they prefer to receive your communications (email, fax, and letter). During these meetings you will have the opportunity to talk about the incubator, however you will gain more traction if you first get them talking about their work. Then select from your portfolio of incubator stories those that might match the priorities of the media contact.

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[17] Source: Entrepreneur Media Inc.: http://www.entrepreneur.com/

[18] Source: SMEToolkit, International Finance Corporation – Public Relations:

http://www.smetoolkit.org/smetoolkit/en/category/954/Public-Relations

It is extremely important for you to be responsive whenever someone from the media contacts you. Typically a writer works under a tight deadline and he will need some background information or a quote. If at all possible, you should drop what you are doing and contact the writer immediately. If you are found to be a useful source of information, it will increase the likelihood that you will be called again in the future. As other writers notice your name being published, it will increase the chances of them contacting you, when they are writing a story for which your expertise is relevant.

If in your region/country there is not a great deal of entrepreneur-aimed publications, you might want to consider proposing to a magazine or newspaper to write a regular 'tips for entrepreneurs' advice column, where different topics are debated each time, potentially putting your incubator in the position of 'opinion leader'. You might also want to consider allowing the column to be interactive, accepting and answering questions from budding entrepreneurs.

When you have some news to offer the media of sufficient significance, it may be appropriate to schedule a press conference. You can gain more media attention by partnering with sponsors and other stakeholders in promoting the press conference. In order to increase the chances of your story being published, it is important to format your press release as a news story, not as an advertisement or promotional piece. The less the journalist has to edit, the more likely he/she will use it. A good reference for this is the Associated Press Stylebook: www.apstylebook.com.[19] Also include jpeg images whenever you can. If published, they will increase your exposure on the page.

Calling media contacts to personally invite them may increase the chances they will attend. Examples of suitable opportunities for calling a press conference due to incubatee activities might include the following:

- Perhaps an incubatee has just signed a term sheet with a high profile venture capitalist, or reached an agreement with a major customer, or hired a well-known business leader as CEO.

- Perhaps the incubator is launching a major new assistance program in collaboration with a government agency, university sponsor or other stakeholder.

- Perhaps the incubator is sponsoring a major event and has been able to attract a widely recognized keynote speaker.

Whenever the incubator is planning a major event, for instance a competition award ceremony, the inauguration of the new incubator building, or the launch of a new business support service, a press conference involving its target audience and the press can be planned to ensure that the information is widely spread and reaches the appropriate stakeholders.

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[19] Source: The Associated Press, 2010 AP Style Book, AP Books: www.apstylebook.com

**When planning a press conference, the following should be taken into consideration:**

- Determine who will speak, but usually do not plan for more than 2 - 3 speakers;

- Introduce each speaker;

- Schedule for optimum exposure: choose a time-slot where the press and audience are available to attend;

- Select a convenient location that is well known and with easy access through public transport and with parking;

- Offer refreshments and snacks at the end of the press conference;

- Illustrate your point by using charts, photos, visual aids, and so forth;

- Start on time! Plan for no more than 30 minutes of speaking time in total, ideally less, and 10 - 20 minutes for Q&A;

- Showcase human interest stories involving incubatees and other stakeholders. The incubator manager needs to guard against becoming the center of attention. The focus needs to be on the incubator and the participants in its ecosystem; and

- If appropriate, you may wish to offer an optional incubator tour at the conclusion of the press conference.

### Section 4.1.8: Publications

Given the increasingly common use of the Internet for communication, any publications (brochures, newsletter, annual reports, and so forth) that are printed will ideally be short, concise, crisp and compelling, and will encourage the reader to go and visit the incubator website for additional information. This saves money on printing and mailing, but also promotes the incubator website as the primary source for information. It is important to note that this does not negate the value of human-to-human communication via phone and face-to-face exchange.

**Different types of publications can be envisaged:**

• Brochures: Incubator brochures or information sheets may be distributed to prospective clients, stakeholders, partners, sponsors, and so forth. One format that works well for incubators is a generic folder that can be subsequently filled with separate sheets detailing the different programs and services you run. This can be tailor-made for each recipient. Good places to distribute your brochures are the welcome / waiting areas of your incubator, trade shows and events, but also chambers of commerce, universities, financial institutions, NGOs that support your mission, government licensing bureaus, and so forth are usually willing to display your promotional material (especially if, as partners, their own logo is on it).

• Newsletter: Even if you post your news on your website regularly, consider sending a newsletter every month or every three months, since many of your target readers will not be visiting your website for regular updates. Newsletters allow you to maintain an invaluable dialogue with the community at large. Writing a newsletter requires consideration of the most appropriate style and format. The writing must be professional and error free. The news must be short and spark public interest. This also can be a great vehicle to feature your clients and promote their innovations and services. So unless you have good writers on staff, you might want to consider the services of a professional or freelance writer / journalist. Although most of the newsletters in the business community are sent out electronically today, some readers might still prefer the classical hard-copy which is not lost in junk mail and can be read at leisure. But you have to offset the cost of printing and distribution against the benefits.

• Annual Report: This is a report compiled and written to highlight the business, financial and marketing activities undertaken during the course of a year. It is usually distributed to shareholders and clients.

**Section 4.1.9: Maximize Impact of Promotion Channels**

**Following the guidelines below will allow the incubator manager to maximize the impact of promotion channels:**

1. Selectivity. The incubator does not have the resources to be actively engaged on a continual basis with all these channels, and it needs to make choices and then continually evaluate the return on investment with respect to achieving objectives.

2. Intensity of commitment. It is more probable that better results can be achieved by investing sufficient effort in a more limited set of channels rather than spreading efforts too thinly across many channels.

3. Follow through and follow up. It is not enough just to participate in promotion through communication to the target market. It is critically important to also capture responses from target customers and stakeholders and to address or utilize them.

4. Reinforcement. Focus on a small number of clear, concise, crisp and compelling messages and look for every opportunity to reinforce them. This is critical to getting a message heard.

5. Avoid information overload. Often people are not looking for all the information right away. Give them enough information to capture their attention, have them visit your website, and then schedule a visit to the incubator facilities or a phone call to gather more information.

6. Unrealistic expectations. Marketing is a slow process. Doing it right takes time. Account for at least 6 months to a year in the service sector to see results from your marketing strategy.

Given how precious incubator staff time is, particularly that of the incubator manager, it is important for the incubator to continually assess the outcomes of promotional activities. A good place to start is by asking new customers and other stakeholders who have taken the initiative to approach the incubator (rather than the other way around) how they heard about the incubator. This will reveal which channels are most effective at generating new contacts. A useful follow up question is: What did you hear that caused you to contact the incubator? It will also be useful to monitor the traffic on the incubator website following a non-routine promoting effort in order to assess the extent to which it has yielded a positive response.

Since a significant percentage of promoting efforts target current customers and other stakeholders, conducting periodic spot interviews, focus groups and surveys to gather feedback can be very helpful in making choices about what channels to emphasize, how to improve messaging, and how to allocate financial and human resources.

## COMPONENT CONCLUSIONS

Before the incubator manager begins work, it is reasonable to expect that during the pre-launch phase the sponsors and other supporters of the incubator will have already established the first elements of an incubator ecosystem. This is a foundation on which the incubator manager can build. It is likely that the incubator will have no incubatees to serve at the foundation and during the early development phase of the incubator lifecycle. The incubator manager, staff and directors should have available resources to focus on promotion, in order to expand the incubator's extended network and to attract incubatees.

During the early development phase, before the incubator has any significant performance outcomes to confirm its value proposition, the incubator team will need to be very proactive in its promotional communications. In addition, the incubator will probably not have yet achieved financial sustainability, and will need to be very attentive in its promotional communications to retain the financial support of sponsors and, if necessary, to attract new sponsors.

If the incubator manager manages this process successfully, the time should come perhaps two or three years after launch when the incubator will have established awareness and credibility among potential incubatees, and among stakeholders and complementors.

**Success indicators of a proactive promotional effort during the early development phase could include:**

- An incubator program filled to capacity with incubatees;

- A robust incubator network, which in combination with the incubator staff and directors, can fulfill the needs of incubatees for mentoring, networking and training; and

- An incubator operation that has achieved financial sustainability and that is no longer totally dependent on subsidization.

Once the incubator is established to the extent where it has gained a certain amount of credibility, if the incubator performs well, most or all promotional activity aimed at attracting new incubatees and new members of the incubator's extended network can be reactive i.e. responding to referrals and to inquiries. The incubator will still need to be proactive in promoting existing and new service programs, and in partnering with other organizations to fill gaps in the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, but overall most or all of the incubator's resources can shift to focusing on supporting incubatees.

# Case Studies

# Promoting an Incubator

**Incubator Name:** Berytech Technology & Health (BTH) Marketing Strategy by BTH, Beirut, Lebanon
**Sector:** IT, Health and Services focused Business Incubator
**This Case Study Examines:** BTH incubator's Marketing Strategy
**Date:** September 2009

**PART I**

## SUMMARY

### Problem

A newly established incubator needs to quickly attract clients (start-ups as incubatees and SMEs as business clients) who will use its services. The clients will not just "walk through the door". A proper marketing strategy needs to be defined to support the organization in achieving its business objectives and in most cases to position itself competitively with regard to the other business development service providers already operating in the area.

### Solution

A robust marketing strategy, which is delivered when an incubator is first established should:

1. Reach its target audience quickly, which consists of potential clients including nascent entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs;

2. Increase general awareness of the incubator's mission and activities, to ensure that the full range of services offered and the added value brought by its stimulating and vibrant community are promoted and acknowledged widely; and

3. Promote entrepreneurship to foster employment, and the relocation of companies in the stimulating environment offered by the business incubator.

**PART II**

## BACKGROUND

Berytech Technology and Health (BTH) Incubator was established in 2007 in the center of Beirut, Lebanon.

In 2002 the first incubator, Berytech, was established in the suburbs of Beirut, on the Science & Technology Campus of Saint Joseph University. This was the first incubator in the region. This business incubator, meeting the needs of companies in the suburbs, reached its total capacity within its first 3 operating years. More incubation space was needed in the center of Beirut to meet the needs of

the rising number of start-ups. Berytech Technology & Health was established, with the support of the European Union, on the Medical Science Campus of Saint Joseph University, as a not-for-profit organization. In addition to offering fully serviced office space to incubatees BTH developed new programs and initiatives that were not proposed in the first incubator. For example, BTH launched "MAP" training, the Micro-enterprise Acceleration Program initiated by Hewlett Packard (HP) to train micro-enterprise owners on how to use information and communication technologies to develop their business.

BTH suffered initially from not implementing a robust marketing plan and underestimated the need to have a proper strategy in order to attract suitable incubatee tenants to fill the available 3000 square meters of incubation space. Its target audience was not-fully aware of its existence, its mission and the services it offered to entrepreneurs. Moreover, the political and economic instability at that time led to a severe "brain drain" of qualified Lebanese people, who were potential entrepreneurs. BTH had to promote entrepreneurship in this challenging environment. Their target audiences were considering starting up businesses outside the country.

### 1. BTH Tactical Marketing Strategy

The incubator's management needed to react quickly and defined BTH's marketing strategy by adopting a tactical approach, an event-oriented and service-oriented approach with the following elements:

#### 1.1. BTH Launch Event

BTH's team applied their marketing strategy from the outset by organizing a Launch Event that was promoted as widely as possible to secure the support of high-level actors as well as their target, potential clients. Overall, the Launch Event attracted more than 1000 people including officials like the Lebanese Minister of Economy, the Head of the European Commission Delegation in Lebanon, a representative of the United Nations, and also key actors of the business support environment such as presidents of banks, financial companies, university professors and existing entrepreneurs.

#### 1.2. Promotion of BTH Initiatives

Since the outset, the BTH marketing strategy focused on promoting every specific initiative the incubator launched in a timely fashion (in most cases at least 6 weeks before the date of the event/initiative).

Examples include:

- • "Summer School for Entrepreneurs" training, a two-week intensive program dedicated to individuals and groups of individuals willing to explore their entrepreneurial potential and assess whether their project is a potential business opportunity worth pursuing. The trainees have the opportunity to develop their business plan, marketing strategy, financial projections and so on.

- "Berytech fund" is a start-up fund that has been launched by BTH and its partners to invest in early growth ICT companies in exchange for equity ownership.

- "BizSpark" is run in partnership with Microsoft, allowing early stage start ups to enroll for free in a 3 year program giving them access to Microsoft applications and technical support as well as funding opportunities from Microsoft contacts.

These initiatives are marketed to the target audiences via internet and mailing campaigns (BTH and partners' websites and e-zines). BTH uses press conferences as a wide promotion tool when launching a new feature as well.

### 1.3. BTH USP and Key Messages

Since the very beginning, BTH defined their Unique Selling Proposition (USP): BTH is "the place to go", the only SME support structure that can provide physical and virtual incubation in central Beirut.

BTH USP is conveyed through key messages to increase the entrepreneurs' confidence in slogans such as "what BTH can do for you" and "trust that your ideas and company are safe with BTH". BTH uses various channels to get these messages across that include the BTH's website and media.

### 2. The Proactive Implementation of BTH Marketing Strategy

The business incubator staff implemented BTH's Marketing Strategy by carrying out the following activities:

### 2.1. BTH Marketing Campaigns

BTH ran marketing campaigns to promote training programs and events organized by BTH and its partners to the incubator's current and potential clients. BTH used cost-efficient promotion tools such as e-zines and other electronic means, including exposure on partners' websites, as well as traditional marketing support such as posters to be displayed in the incubator, the universities and partners' premises.

These actions were supported by BTH public information sessions organized to raise awareness about training seminars (e.g. MAP), programs (e.g. BizSpark) and events (e.g. the Incubation Award). Session attendees included the target audience (entrepreneurs), and also media contacts who would then act as multipliers by relaying the information to other companies and entrepreneurs.

### 2.2. Attendance to and Promotion of Strategic Events

BTH attended other events organized by strategic stakeholders.

- The incubator staff attended relevant national high-level entrepreneurship, innovation, and capacity building related events (e.g. a UN workshop on promoting innovation in

the Arab world). In attending such events organized for instance by the EC Delegation in Lebanon, or the Ministry of Economy, the incubator staff was often given a speaking slot to present the incubator, its missions and activities.

• The incubator staff attended peer group meetings for incubator and Science Park managers to interact and share experience regarding their activities in order to learn from each other and to transfer best practices. These meetings helped BTH to create new partnerships and enhance the existing ones - partners can become a useful promotional tool to relay the key messages of the incubator and promote its activities in the community it operates.

• BTH took part in "road shows" for students which showcase the best student entrepreneur projects. BTH staff first promoted the road shows at meetings with university students (up to 100) and secured their participation in the road shows by proposing they take part in a business idea competition.  The best student projects are showcased and provided with awards at the road shows. Taking part in the road shows also gave BTH the opportunity to promote the incubator to students with interesting start-up projects which could be future clients for the incubator. The BTH staff carefully recorded the students' contact details to promote their services to them after the road shows.

Promoting strategic events is a key element of BTH's marketing strategy. Promotion before the event is crucial, but promotional activities are also required after the event, for example via press releases to highlight the outcomes of the events and demonstrate the role of BTH.

### 2.3. Organization of Events

BTH organized innovative and entrepreneurship related events at both national and regional levels such as the 1st Entrepreneurs Fair in Lebanon, partnering with another incubator in the area, Berytech, and a Foundation from Dubai. BTH and its partners ran a national campaign including: radio advertising, direct campaigns via mobile text messages, poster displays, articles in business magazines, and even participation in a local TV talk show. The Entrepreneurs Fair attracted 1500 visitors over 2 days. The TV talk show was less efficient than expected as it was broadcasted in the morning and could not reach the target audience of entrepreneurs at work at that time of the day.

### 2.4. Maintenance of an Interactive and up-to-date Website

The BTH bilingual website (in English and French) is hosted on the same portal as Berytech (the first Beirut based incubator) and the Berytech fund (mentioned above). The website is structured using the sections listed below:

• "About us" displays the incubator's partners, its mission, and objectives as well as the Health and Technology poles of excellence.

• "Services" describes what is offered by the incubator and includes incubation, hot-desking, company hosting, business counseling, training, special programs, soft-landing services, and Microsoft BizSpark.

- "Business Facilities" includes information about meeting rooms, a video conference facility and a function room.

- "Enterprises" providing a directory of the incubated companies.

- "Admission guidelines" providing information about how to apply for incubation, hot-desking, hosting or accelerator.

- "Testimonials" where an interview with an entrepreneur supported by BTH is featured on a monthly basis.

- "SME resources", which gathers useful links.

- "News" includes recent as well as archived news and newsletters published every 3 months.

- "Search" function.

- "Contact us" displays a map and contact details of the incubator.

- "Job Seeker" holds a CV bank for people looking for jobs in the companies incubated by BTH as well as a public service advertising job openings in the incubatees.

When organizing an important event, BTH creates a specific website for this event in order to gather all related information as well as blogs in one unique place to increase the promotional impact.

### 2.5. Creating and Enhancing Strategic Partnerships with Public and Civil Society Stakeholders

- BTH signed Memorandums of Understanding with relevant institutions, such as the United Nations or business development service providers, to support each other in their mission of promoting entrepreneurship.

- Strategic alliances with key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Economy, help BTH support entrepreneurs by providing experts as trainers for the Summer School for Entrepreneurs.

### 2.6. Incubation Grants and Awards
BTH runs an annual campaign to attract the best projects for the Incubation Award via banners on websites, e-zines, and radio campaigns. Three innovative projects are usually selected and awarded BTH's hosting and support services free for 6 months or 1 year. The award ceremony takes place just before Christmas, within the context of the incubator's annual event gathering all clients and partners. This event also presents an opportunity for BTH to honor a Lebanese entrepreneur with an Excellence awarded for its contribution to the country.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The BTH marketing strategy was developed and implemented between 2007 and 2009.

Please see Annex 1 for the detailed BTH Marketing Plan 2008 – 2009.

## OUTCOME AND CONCLUSIONS

Since its establishment in 2007, BTH has implemented specific initiatives aimed at promoting through a dynamic marketing strategy using various promotional tools. BTH has achieved the following to date (mid 2009):

- 35 incubatees on any given year, with 15 to 20 in the early growth stage;

- The creation of 150 jobs within the incubator;

- 100% occupancy rate in accelerator and hosting parts of the incubator;

- 100 entrepreneurs trained by the incubator's staff and the incubator's strategic partners' experts;

- 100+ meetings with nascent and existing entrepreneurs for guidance, coaching, and so on;

- 75% occupancy rate of the incubator's hot-desking space;

- Attendance to / organization of 100+ entrepreneurship oriented events; and

- 8 women entrepreneurs.

In order to achieve the above stated results, BTH has 10 staff members of which 3 are senior executives focused on promotional activities: Incubator Director, Business Advisor, Marketing Manager. The remaining 7 staff members include the Financial Manager, IT Administrator, Welcome Desk Hostess, Site Manager, and Facilities & Maintenance Manager.

**PART III**

## LINKS

- Berytech Technology and health incubator: **www.bth.berytech.org**

- Berytech incubator: **www.berytech.org**

- Berytech fund : **www.berytechfund.org**

- Entrepreneurs fair : **www.entrepreneurs-forum.org**

- Cluster funded by EU(with some incubatees): **www.lebanonsoftshore.com**

- Technology association (business and events partners): **http://alsionline.org/;**

- Professional Computer Association of Lebanon: **www.pca.org.lb**

- Lebanese Incubator: www.biat.org

- Lebanese Incubator: www.southbic.org

- Loan Guarantee Company (strategic partner): www.kafalat.com.lb

## REFERENCES

The material for this case study was contributed by the former Communication & Business Development Director and current Incubator Director, Mrs Tania Saba Mazraani. The information above is extracted from firsthand experience and personal involvement in the development of the previously mentioned tools.

**Contact details:**

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# Business Incubator Branding

**Incubator Name:** Business Incubator's Branding Model by SODBI, Shymkent, Kazakhstan.
**Sector:** Generalist Business Incubator
**This Case Study Examines:** The branding model of the incubator is its key to position itself in the entrepreneurial landscape of the region.
**Date:** October 2009

**PART I**

## SUMMARY

**Problem**

In areas where the population is not aware of the concept of business incubation, a business incubator may struggle to operate. Indeed, not being recognized and acknowledged by the population, the incubator may be very limited in its actions, not being able to reach its target audience.

**Solution**

For the incubator to position itself in its market, it must define its own branding model. The brand of the incubator must allow the population to:

- Recognize the incubator and its mission;

- Acknowledge its activities;

- Understand what the incubator can do for them; and

- Approach the incubator when they need business support.

**PART II**

## BACKGROUND

When starting its operations in April 2000, SODBI Business Incubator staff identified a major issue: the population they aimed to support was not aware of the business incubation process and hence of what SODBI could do for them.

The key challenge for the incubator was then to position itself in the market and make sure its target audience was aware and would acknowledge its existence and activities.

1. **SODBI Mission Statement, Objectives and Positioning:**

1.1. Mission statement: SODBI Business Incubator strives to improve the economic situation of Southern Kazakhstan through providing consistent support to small enterprises, start-ups, and
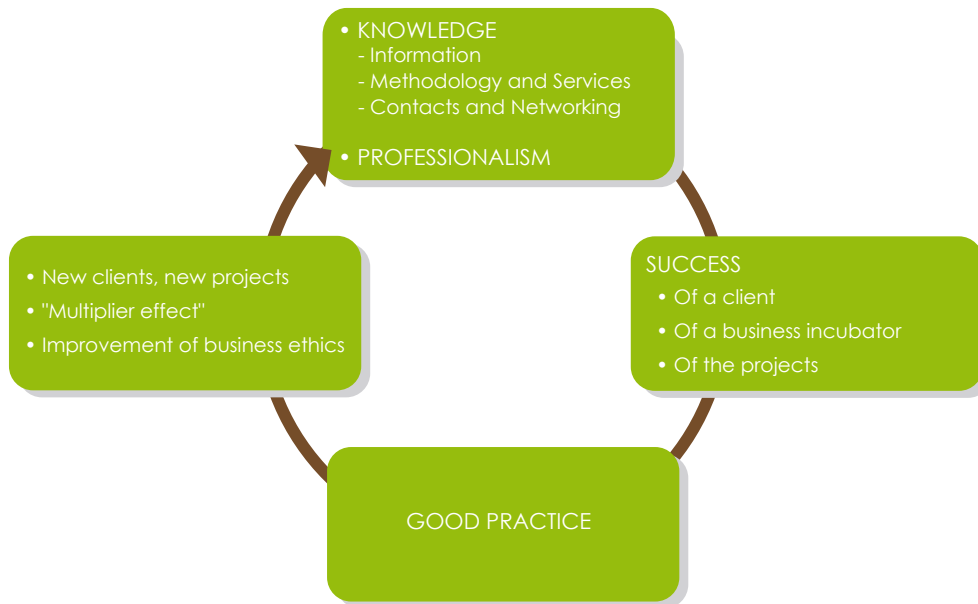
innovative ideas, as well as the stimulation of entrepreneurial thinking and corporate social responsibility.

1.2. System of objectives:

**Mission**
• Stimulating the establishment of new businesses
• Supporting small businesses
• Stimulating innovation development

**Positioning**
• Knowledge
• Professionalism
• Innovative thinking

**12 top goals**
• To be proactive within the city / region;
• Focus on client groups;
• Powerful and attractive product and services;
• Synergies amongst units, projects and products;
• Information management and databases;
• Effective system of commitments towards clients;
• Broad and positive awareness within the city / region;
• Strong and effective organization system;
• Financial sustainability and success;
• Staff motivation and development;
• Strong regional and international networking; and
• Stimulation and building on functional networks.

1.3. Positioning mechanism of SODBI in South Kazakhstan: the graph below demonstrates how the business incubator influences the economy of the southern region and small businesses within.

The positioning is the key element of SODBI's promotional communication and highly influences its corporate identity.

• KNOWLEDGE
- Information
- Methodology and Services
- Contacts and Networking

• PROFESSIONALISM

SUCCESS
• Of a client
• Of a business incubator
• Of the projects

GOOD PRACTICE

• New clients, new projects
• "Multiplier effect"
• Improvement of business ethics

**2. SODBI Target Groups:**

All client companies are sub-divided into eight target groups (see table below).

• By the sphere of activities into two groups (group A and group B).

Group A clients:

  • Production

  • Agriculture

  • Technologies

  • Tourism

  • Subsidiary services to production, agriculture, technologies and tourism

  • Workshops

Group B clients:
  • Trade
  • Public catering
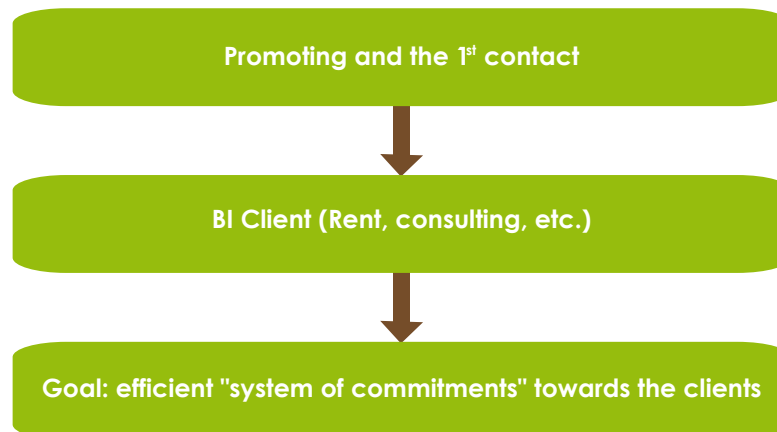  • Service activities and other

• By maturity into four stages:
  1 – Potential entrepreneurs
  2 – Start ups
  3 – Medium-maturity
  4 – Mature companies

|   | A | B |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4** | A4 | B4 | Mature |
| **3** | A3 | B3 | Medium-Maturity |
| **2** | A2 | B2 | Start-Ups |
| **1** | A1 | B1 | Potential Entrepreneurs |

The priority groups for SODBI are companies from the A1-A3 groups. However, since the priority groups constitute less than 10% of the total market, considerable focus has been given to attracting clients from all groups – A1-4 and B1-4. By taking this approach, SODBI can generate revenues which it invests in the incubator's development and services at favorable conditions to groups A1-A3.

**3. Clients' management:**

SODBI defined a standard practice for managing the clients at different stages of development. The whole process starts with the attraction of the company, thanks to the incubator's promotional actions.

**Promoting and the 1st contact**

↓

**BI Client (Rent, consulting, etc.)**

↓

**Goal: efficient "system of commitments" towards the clients**

**4. Branding = the key element of SODBI's marketing strategy:**

4.1. Key challenges for SODBI:

• To raise awareness about incubation within the **SME community** (as the concept of business incubation was relatively new in the Kazakhstani market): the main activities were aimed at building trust in the incubator's products and services among SMEs through international cooperation, in particular with incubators from Poland (the Polish model of incubation has been adapted in SODBI).

• To raise awareness of SODBI's mission and activities among **government bodies** (at local, regional and national scales): positioning SODBI as an effective instrument to support the business community (serving as a bridge between the local governments and SMEs in order to address the local SMEs' information and training needs).

• To raise awareness of SODBI among the **donor community**: positioning SODBI as a local NGO focusing on SME development, well aware of the local needs, having strong links with key decision-makers at local level and hence a valuable partner worth collaborating with.

• To promote SODBI among the **mass media**: building strong partnerships with local and national media to be acknowledged and recognized as the contact point for expertise in SME-related fields, and as the source of information about business-related activities and SME-oriented local events.

### 4.2. The answer = SODBI's marketing strategy:

The main activities carried out by SODBI's marketing team include:

• Market analysis;

• Strategic marketing plan development and modification;

• Monitoring and evaluation of promotional activities;

• Information gathering and dissemination of new product and services development;

• Development and implementation of the **Corporate Identity System** (including corporate culture, corporate design, corporate behavior, corporate communications) and **brand**; and

• Advertisement and PR

### 4.3. SODBI's branding objectives:

The brand is the key tool to enhance the information task of both internal (incubator employees, project staff, etc.) and external target groups to strengthen SODBI's outreach. The external communication target groups also include potential donors and business development service providers within regional and global incubator communities/ networks.

The specific objectives of SODBI's branding include:

• A lean and effective Public Relations and Outreach structure requiring as little resources as possible;

• Efficient internal/ external communication through branded instruments and channels; and

• Raising awareness amongst the stakeholders' community in order for SODBI to be recognized and acknowledged as the business development service provider in the region.

Components of SODBI's branding:

• **Image:** to achieve and to maintain a positive image amongst the key target groups;

• **Positioning**: to act as and be recognized as a trustful and knowledgeable local partner having strong international partnerships, information and knowledge about local and international markets, implementing activities that improve the local business environment.

• **Awareness building**: to widely disseminate activities implemented in cooperation with local and international partners, as well as through partnerships with local, national and electronic media.

4.4. SODBI's branding instruments:

Information management:

- Information and knowledge management database

- Intranet

- CRM System

Visual means:

- Corporate design

- Navigation system within the incubator territory

- Information stands

- Sign-board

Corporate website:

- Background information on the incubator

- Information about the incubator's products and services

- Information on the incubator's partners

- "Virtual business cards" for incubator residents

SODBI internal newsletter:

- Quarterly

- Internal PR towards staff and incubator residents

SODBI external (donor/partner) newsletter:

- Bi-annually/ needs basis

- Incubator news and publications

- Project summaries (case studies, reports, and so forth)

Events:

- Local/regional working groups, round tables, conferences

- Competitions (such as a business plan competition, tenant of the year, etc.)

- Research publications (such as incubator benchmarking, market research, etc.)

Print:

- Press folder (brief)

- Information lists/ Fact sheets

- Flyers (Printing is done within synergies with events)

Press:

- Events

- Press folder

- Press releases

- Publications

Direct promoting:

- Personal contacts/ meetings

- "word-of-mouth" information

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- **1999:** Director Kairat Sugurbekov studies business incubator concepts in Poland and Germany.

- **April 2000:** SODBI business incubator officially starts operating on the basis of the Polish model.

- **2000-2002:** the Business Incubator building is reconstructed and the information resource center is set-up with GTZ, EURASIA Foundation and SOROS Foundation Kazakhstan's support.

- **September 2002:** official opening of the reconstructed building of the business Incubator on Zhandosov Street, Shymkent.

- **September 2002:** SODBI business incubator organizes and hosts the 2nd International Conference on Business Incubation in Central Asia.

- **January 2003:** SOROS Foundation Kazakhstan awards the business incubator a grant to reconstruct the premises on the adjoining area for production space, equal to 1,000 square meters.

- **June 2003:** SODBI business incubator wins World Bank *info*Dev grant competition along with co-funding from SOROS and EURASIA.

## OUTCOME AND CONCLUSIONS

SODBI has achieved the following up to 2009:

- Hosts 32 tenants with over 450 employees;

- Establishes a local partners' network (government/ NGO/ academia);

- Establishes a national partners' network (government/ NGO/ incubator);

- Level of overall awareness within the target audience in the region is 83% whereas 20% are well aware of the organization; and

- 72% of respondents treat SODBI as a source of business consulting services, 30% - supporting SMEs through provision of office and production space, 20% - supporting SMEs with searching for finance, 14% - training for small business, 10% - supporting innovation development. More than 70% of respondents have indicated a high level of trust in SODBI.*

* (according to the most recent research "Consulting and training services market within the Southern Kazakhstan region", performed by BISAM Central Asia, September 2009)

**PART III**

## LINKS

- SODBI website:
Http://www.sodbi.kz/php/modules.php?name=main&menu_id=0&newlang=2&lm_img_flag=0

- SODBI *info*Dev profile: http://www.idisc.net/en/Incubator.36.html

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The material for this case study was contributed by the project manager, Mrs Tatyana Shpuling.

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# A New Approach to Promoting an Incubator

**Incubator Name:** in.Q.ba Formación de Emprendedores
**Sector:** General
**This Case Study Examines:** How in.Q.ba promotes a new approach of business incubation in Mexico
**Date:**  October 2009

## PART I

### SUMMARY

### Problem
In a challenging business environment where entrepreneurship is only really considered when one is unemployed or retired, and the survival rate of enterprises is low, a business incubator might not have a sufficiently positive image for its target audience.

### Solution
A strong and innovative marketing strategy aims to effectively communicate the right message and attract the right target audience, ready to change their mindset and approach business incubation differently, such as adopting a business success oriented approach.

## PART II

### BACKGROUND

Following market research in Mexico, it was identified that the business support services were mainly provided by universities and institutions, of which only a minority implemented training as a support service for entrepreneurs.

In 2008, a new business incubator was established in Mexico with the aim of reducing the percentage of Mexico-based companies that are only in existence for a maximum of 5 years. In fact, at the time, 95% of Mexico-based companies did not survive more than 5 years. Hence, in.Q.ba presents itself as an alternative to the current business support services to provide more effective coaching to new businesses and entrepreneurs.

The team from in.Q.ba believed in a different business support approach based on three elements:

- Courses

- Coaching

- Incubation

This represents a "facility for coaching and mentoring" that contributes to the acquisition of knowledge, abilities and attitudes needed for creating and developing successful businesses, in particular via a close relationship with business owners and entrepreneurs contributing to the program by providing coaches, mentors, or hosting trainees in their structures.

in.Q.ba focused on what it considered the key issue which was to change the mindset of the whole population, with a focus on high school pupils in order to enhance their entrepreneurial culture and skills.

In this regard, in.Q.ba implemented an efficient innovative marketing strategy to raise awareness among the population and get the right message through.

### 1. To raise awareness:
in.Q.ba displayed messages on the city's billboards.



Puedes llegar, sólo tienes que **emprender** el viaje.

www.inqba.org.mx

"You can get there – you just have to 'entrepreneur' your way there"

### 2. To communicate the message:
The second campaign displayed on the city's billboard was an answer to the first one, giving the solution to the questions the first campaign may have raised within the population.

"In-Q-bate your destiny – Study Creation & Management of Companies!"



"Entrepreneurship is written with a Q (from In-Q-bator)"

"Study Creation& Management of Companies!"

3. To communicate the offer:

For the third campaign, the offer of further study / degrees, was presented clearly and displayed using various types of communication channels.

Bill board:



"Studying to be an entrepreneur? Only in an In-Q-bator!"

"Degrees in Creation & Management of Companies!"

Brochure with more details of the courses which are run by the Incubator:

Poster:



"The training of an entrepreneur never ends…"

"Degrees in Franchising Development, Family Business Management, and Strategic Sales for SMEs." "Training in Innovation for Companies Growth"

E-mail:



"The training of an entrepreneur never ends… "

"Courses in a variety of subjects:"

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- **April 2008:** Development of in.Q.ba's Business Plan.

- **August 2008:** Setting up of the business incubator.

- **December 2008:** First promotional campaign.

- **January 2009:** Start of incubation operation (59 entrepreneurs registered for the courses offered).

- **February 2009:** Second promotional campaign.

- **May 2009:** Third promotional campaign.

- **December 2009:** 162 entrepreneurs participated in the incubation program, including coaching sessions.

## OUTCOME AND CONCLUSIONS

By implementing an innovative and attractive marketing strategy in 3 steps, in.Q.ba managed to raise awareness within the population and begin changing the population's mindset to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit and skills of the potential entrepreneurs in Mexico.

## PART III

## LINKS

- in.Q.ba website: http://www.inqba.org.mx/

- Article: http://www.elartedelosnegocios.com/2009/09/inqba-formacion-de-emprendedores/

- Article: http://noticias.pateandopiedras.com/?p=30726

- Article:
http://www.negocius.com.mx/inqba-dictara-diplomado-en-desarrollo-de-franquicias_wv1708.html

- Article:
http://www.tormo.com.mx/noticias/1951/In.Q.ba_anuncia_diplomado_en_desarrollo_de_franquicias_a_partir_del_11_de_septiembre_.html

- Article :
http://www.comunicacionsocial.gob.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=32766%3A64-de-la-poblacion-ocupada-en-puebla-labora-en-mipymes&Itemid=11

## REFERENCES

The material for this case study was contributed by the team from in.Q.ba.

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**http://www.pixelearning.com/**

Rensselaer Polytechnic University, Incubation Program, Troy, New York:

**http://www.incubator.com/**

The Associated Press, 2010 AP Style Book, AP Books

**http:// www.apstylebook.com**

## SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

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# Annex 1:

# Berytech Technology and Health Marketing Plan

## I. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Berytech Technology and Health (BTH) has been created to provide support for start-ups and developing enterprises.

Berytech Technology and Health business goals are:

- To provide hosting services to SMEs;

- To provide business advice and training services to their client SMEs;

- To focus on the following catchments areas: Beirut and suburbs; and

- To position itself competitively by applying market rate prices for hosting (in addition to the provision of added-value services offered in addition to hosting) and under market average rates for the business support services provided to their clients.

### 1. PERCEPTION OF BTH

Thanks to the previous experience with Berytech, BTH is well recognized as a center that hosts and supports entrepreneurs.

However "virtual incubation" such as support services to entrepreneurs located outside the Business Development Center (BDC) is not yet acknowledged. BTH is recognized locally as well as internationally by Lebanese people around the world thanks to its website.

BTH is acknowledged by NGOs and public authorities as a reference for SME support, but there is a misunderstanding amongst a segment of the public that BTH provides property services.

### 2. POTENTIAL CLIENTS

2.1. Mid-career executives whose needs can be answered by BTH, such as:

a) A location from where to start up a business;

b) Moral and technical support to do so; and

c) Access to financing.

Factors influencing their decision are:

a) Features of BTH space (different sizes for different needs);

b) The business center (meeting rooms, IT equipment, etc.);

c) Trust that there is added value in being hosted or associated with Berytech;

d) Availability of on-site and tailor-made advice and support; and

e) Possibility for networking.

2.2. Existing SMEs aiming to relocate in a stimulating environment or looking for advice to develop their business.

Factors influencing their decision are:

- Features of BTH space (different sizes for different needs);
- The business center (meeting rooms, IT equipment, etc.);
- Trust that there is added value in being hosted or associated with Berytech;
- Availability of on-site and tailor-made advice and support; and
- Possibility for networking.

2.3. Graduates with projects offering potential. They need to validate the commercial viability of their project and they also need hosting, moral support, entrepreneurial skills, access to stakeholders and funding.

Factors influencing their decision are:

- The possibility to be hosted or even subsidized – low cost access to business space;
- The access to business advice and training as well as networking through Berytech; and
- The credibility that Berytech validating their projects brings to them.

### 3. COMPETITION

There is no competition to date in terms of a BDC that provides hosting premises and business support services to entrepreneurs. However there could be 2 types of indirect competition:

- Executive business spaces (Regus, Dora Gate, Liberty Tower) that provide hosting with certain services; and
- Business consultants at large who provide business advice services.

However both are very difficult to access for start-ups due to the associated costs.

### 4. STRENGTHS

BTH has four years of experience in the incubation and entrepreneurship process obtained via Berytech. The management team states: "We know the product and we know the market. We have an established network (universities, private companies, counselors, and other strategic allies of the BDC) that we can draw in our operation. We understand the needs of entrepreneurs and try to address them. We offer comprehensive services and spaces tailor-made to the needs of growing start-ups (from hot desk to self-contained modules). We have meeting and conference spaces that allow for networking, training and conferencing, therefore creating a dynamic hub around our center."

### 5. OPPORTUNITIES

The SME Unit from the Ministry provides BTH's team with capacity building opportunities by contracting short term and long term experts. The SME Unit also supports the BDC by providing the BDC's team and their client SMEs with counseling services.

There is more and more public and international (NGOs) interest in supporting SMEs, hence the opportunity to fund and provide support to more entrepreneurs. Berytech can rely on the background of its first incubator operations and present ties with the EU-funded SME program to funnel or channel some of these funds so that they reach their client SMEs.

The incubator raises and fosters awareness on the subject of entrepreneurship thanks also to other programs (Bader, MIT business plan competition, etc.). The MIT Arab Business Plan Competition is designed to encourage all entrepreneurs in the region to start their own company and, ultimately, create a nest of leading firms in the Arab world. It also brings to the Arab world all the MIT expertise in entrepreneurship and in running such competitions. The equivalent of the MIT Arab Business Plan Competition in Boston is called the MIT 50K Entrepreneurship Competitions and has created a number of leading firms and thousands of jobs (www.mitarabcompetition.com/aboutmit.php).

The incubator enhances the capacity of SMEs to grow and survive by catering to international markets.

There is a strong interest among expatriates to return to Lebanon to bring in new technologies, ideas and means. They have strong linkages with export markets – and, given local political instability, there is high interest in export markets.

Berytech is setting up its own seed fund to finance promising start-ups.

**6. THREATS**

- Political instability hindering local and foreign investment
- Lack of deal flow
- Desire of graduates and young executives to find job placements abroad
- Lack of confidence in independent support structures such as BDCs

**7. UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION**

BTH is the only SME support structure that can provide physical and virtual incubation in Beirut and the region.

BTH has a not-for-profit mission to support as many entrepreneurs and SMEs as possible and offer the following features:

- Managed work space from hot-desking to self contained modules
- Business center
- Formal and informal meeting places
- Broadband internet access at subsidized rates
- In-house business advisors
- Access to independent and international experts through the SME support unit
- Periodic training and conferences

• Networking to favor interaction among peers, potential business partners, local and international business community

• Access to funding: Kafalat, seed-fund, etc.

• Access to incubation grants from own funds and from partners

• Access to technical assistance through other NGO support programs (IESC http://www.iesc.org/; USAID http://www.usaid.gov/; ELCIM http://elcim-lb.org/, etc.)

• Access to a network of BDCs in Bekaa, Tripoli and Saida

This array of comprehensive services is beyond the reach and capacities of competitors who remain space providers or consultants proposing above market rate prices for their services.

## II. COMMUNICATION /MARKETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

• To create awareness about BTH in Beirut and the services provided for both hosting companies and business support services

• To explain to potential entrepreneurs the concept of incubation/ incubators and their benefits

• To promote BDC as a center of entrepreneurship excellence, which will also impact positively on the tenant (credibility, visibility, etc)

• To promote entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment

These communication goals need to bring about the following changes in attitude:

• BTH would like their target audience to overcome any inhibitions about contacting the incubator by phone or through a visit, in order to enquire about the services provided.

• To convince potential entrepreneurs that this BDC is the best environment to start up their business.

• To convince potential clients that seeking the BDC's counsel will bring added value to their business.

• To convince young, qualified Lebanese people to become entrepreneurs and bring added value/ business to the country.

• To overcome the suspicions of entrepreneurs who often believe that:

    a) In Lebanon there are no high ethical standards/ no opportunities;

    b) The incubator might steal their ideas; and

    c) There must be a non communicated interest from the BDC that might prejudice the company in the future (e.g. stealing of IP).

These communication goals need to bring about the following changes in behavior:

• To generate a substantial number of inquiries per week – in 2006, the number of enquiries was of 1/ week. A target of at least 5 inquiries/ week was set for the end of 2007.

• To attract entrepreneurs to business advice services: to provide at least 8 hours of counseling/ week.

• To attract at least 10 start-ups for incubation/ year.

• To support about 50 structures (project, start-up, SME) overall during their first 3 operating years.

• To mobilize those from Lebanon across the world, to involve their networks and incite expatriates to:

a) Establish outsourcing centers in Lebanon;

b) Provide linkages to foreign markets; and

c) Provide counseling services to local SMEs.

## 1. TARGET GROUPS

• Primary

| WHO ARE THEY? | WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED? |
|---|---|
| Executives in existing companies locally and in the Lebanese population across the world (between 27 – 35 years old) who have experience, personal funds and desire to establish their own company | To think of entrepreneurship as an alternative to employment/ exile. To stop the brain drain. To incite them to take the leap of setting up their own business. |
| Doctors/ executives in the health sector | To establish high value companies in the health sector (high potential sector). |
| SMEs offering added value products/ services looking to expand and grow | To encourage them to grow beyond their borders and their potential. To think of ways to improve what they are currently doing and how they are doing it. |
| Entrepreneurs from Lebanon across the world | To consider Lebanon as a destination for outsourcing. To bring their technical know-how home to participate in the capacity building process. |
| University graduates from technology/ engineering/ business school owners of projects with commercial success potential | To take a direct route to entrepreneurship without going through employment. |
| Women in all of the above criteria | To encourage them to take an active role in the professional world. To become entrepreneurs. |

• Secondary

| WHO ARE THEY? | WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED? |
|---|---|
| Stakeholders in the Lebanese economy: banks, chambers of commerce and industry, ministries, etc. | To become advocates for the support of SMEs, to enact favorable measures for SMEs. |
| Faculty staff in Universities | To direct their students to the incubator. To collaborate with them on projects. To detect entrepreneurs amongst the students. |
| NGOs managing support programs for Lebanon in general and SMEs in particular; trade attachés in foreign consulates on the forefront of all aid programs dedicated to Lebanese SMEs | To provide funds, technical assistance, aid programs where applicable to SMEs benefiting from the incubator's services. |
| Policy makers in relevant ministries (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy & Trade, Ministry of Industry, etc.) | To promote favorable policies for SMEs and the commercial interests of SMEs abroad. To provide market openings for SMEs through government lobbying. |

### 2. IMAGE & PERSONALITY OF THE BUSINESS INCUBATOR

BTH needs to communicate its position of being "the place to go" for business support. Features / messages are designed to foster the entrepreneur's confidence in "what BTH can do for you" and inspire "trust that your ideas and company are safe with BTH."

The communication will be implemented through strong statements / promises / benefits to be expected. The choice of words, images, layouts, etc. is crucial to communicate BTH's key messages. Some examples include:

• "You are in good hands"

• "Your ideas are safe with us"

• "We can help you meet your goal"

• "We know your needs"

• "We have the structure, resources and know how to train you and advise you properly"

• "We host companies in the forefront of technology, services, etc."

• "Come in anytime, call, email. We will respond to you."

• "Don't be afraid to ask"

• "You can test the worthiness of your ideas/ business plan with us/ our experts"

## 3. KEY MESSAGES

**BTH IS YOUR LOCATION & GATEWAY TO ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS**

In the sub-message for these different target groups, BTH is using the following strategies:

- BTH describe their infrastructure, know-how and the services offered to hosted or virtual incubatees.

- BTH encourage entrepreneurs and SMEs to access their services through incubation grants (which subsidize their hosting, training, counselling, etc.) and the competitive advantage of getting access to high standard business advice at subsidized rates.

- At the media level, BTH regularly publish and broadcast their activities aimed at training, informing, lobbying or networking.

- For product/ service advertising, BTH describe their dynamic, service orientated environment which allows hosted tenants to benefit from the synergy and networking opportunities created. For virtual clients, the emphasis is on the availability of a broad range of services/ expertise in one shop.

- Emotionally BTH underlines the importance for Lebanese entrepreneurs to stay in Lebanon and create added value and jobs for the local economy. BTH also stresses that they are on the entrepreneurs' side, accompanying them during the crucial early years of company creation and operations. To illustrate this statement, BTH use the success figures for accompanied companies vs. unaccompanied ones.

## 4. CHANNELS AND ACTIVITIES

Below is a table showing each activity undertaken, as well as the scope, target audience and staff member in charge of the task.

**Suite 2**
**Business Incubator Operations**

| MEDIA | TARGET AUDIENCES | KEY MESSAGES/CONTENT | OBJECTIVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Corporate design** | All stakeholders | Professional image and recognizable identity | To communicate its position as "the place to go" for business support |
| **Website** | All stakeholders, especially potential clients locally and among the Diaspora | Comprehensive information about the mission, role and features of the business incubator. It emphasizes the services that can be provided and keeps visitors up to date with the news and activities | To inform about services and activities. To persuade visitors to contact BTH. To highlight the importance of BTH as a key economic player for SMEs |
| **Promotion of website through banners, features etc. on all partner websites** | All stakeholders and potential clients | Logo with a description of BTH's role and mission have been posted on partners websites such as Bader (www.baderlebanon.com), Saradar Foundation (www.fondationsaradar.org), Netcommerce http://www.netcommerce.com.lb) | To entice visitors' curiosity and direct them to BTH's to website |
| **Workshops** | Client groups | Through capacity building, entrepreneurs can acquire the skills required and enhance chances of success. | To familiarize entrepreneurs with all aspects of business. To enhance their skills in crucial areas: finance, Human Resources management, marketing, etc. |
| **Expert appearances** | Stakeholders, potential clients and existing clients | Information and tips about how audiences can improve the way they do business. | To promote BTH as recognized experts and leaders in the business community. |
| **Direct e-mailings** | Potential and existing clients | Conferences, workshops, tips, relevant economic news, promotion from partner organizations, etc. | To encourage clients to think of BTH as a very informed source of useful information. To tell clients that we know their needs and that BTH caters for them by channeling important information, organizing conferences of relevance to them, etc. |
| **Media relations (press briefings, press conferences, releases, press packs)** | General public, potential beneficiaries, key economical and political actors figures | 1. Role and importance of BTH for the local economy 2. Success stories, human interest stories 3. New economic trends, etc. 4. Activities of BTH | To raise broad awareness of BTH aims. To encourage target groups to learn more and resort to services. To create an impact at policy level. |
| **High profiles events (BDC official launch, entrepreneurship events)** | General public, stakeholders, potential clients | To draw attention to the BDC's development milestones, high-profile events are organized to which high level representatives of all stakeholders are invited (Ministers, Ambassadors, key economic players, policy makers, companies' CEOs, etc). The events use visual and other materials to draw attention to the opportunities and encourage potential beneficiaries to learn more. | To inform people of important milestones and achievements and encourage stakeholders to lean more. Attract aid programs. To reach policy makers. |

**Suite 2
Business Incubator Operations**

## 5. WORK PLAN (EXAMPLE)

| NR | ACTION | INDICATIVE BUDGET | OUTPUTS | EVALUATION OUTCOMES | TASK PERFORMED BY | DEADLINE 1 QR | 2 QR | 3 QR | 4 QR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Central Information tools** | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Development of Corporate design and printed material, building signage internally and externally | $9,000 | Visibility guidelines developed and used in all materials | Visibility guidelines properly used and materials and activities readily recognized by clients. (recognition as per survey results) | TS | X | | | |
| 2 | Development of Web site | $5,000 | Website in place and regularly updated / Web address widely promoted | Nr of hits / Nr of downloads / Level of perceived usefulness from stakeholders/clients (as per survey) | TS/HA | X | | | |
| 3 | Maintaining and updating the website | $1,000/yr | Regularity and comprehensiveness of updates | Client groups are always responding to up-to-date and current offers, messages. | TS/HA | X | X | X | X |
| 4 | Information material (Brochure) | $3,900 | 1 Corporate brochure / 1 Informational leaflet | Survey results indicating level of familiarity with and perceived usefulness/influence of brochures | TS | | X | X | |
| 5 | Advertising | $10,000/yr | Posters, Outdoor panels, exhibition material | Recall of ads / Reaction to ads (as indicated in survey) | TS | X | X | X | X |
| 6 | Media relations | | 1 press release/term; 2press conferences/year 1 interview every two months in TV show/ daily or monthly; regular interview with entrepreneurs and features published. | Nr of potential beneficiaries who have seen materials and were encouraged to learn more (survey). / Nr of members of public who can recall seeing stories about BDCs and have formed a favorable opinion. | TS/MNC | X | X | X | X |
| 7 | Guest/expert appearances | | Number of appearances; popularity, influence of forum amongst target groups | Nr. of persons who have seen/heard speaker and learned more/formed a favorable attitude/or been encouraged to contact BTH as a result of appearance. (survey results/ applications sheet indicating this as source of info about BDC) | MNC/NR | X | X | X | X |

**Suite 2**
**Business Incubator Operations**

| NR | ACTION | INDICATIVE BUDGET | EVALUATION | | TASK PERFORMED BY | DEADLINE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES | | 1 QR | 2 QR | 3 QR | 4 QR |
| | **Central Information tools** | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Professional and career exhibitions | $6000 | | | NR/TS | | X | X | |
| 9 | Annual survey of key targets to assess knowledge of, attitude towards and experience of BTH and its services and of exposure to and perceived usefulness of different types of information activities | $2,000 | Survey of the intended audience during trade shows, events, or through targeted mailing | Nr. of persons who know BTH, are willing to use their services | TS/GM | X | X | X | X |
| 10 | Information indicating source of knowledge about BTH. | | To ask people who contacted BTH about the source of their information. | Defining channels of information that work best for BTH. | TS/GM | X | X | X | X |
| 11 | Source of requests for information (web, meetings, shows, etc) | | | Defining channels of information that work best for BTH. | TS and team | X | X | X | X |
| 12 | To develop evaluation report and recommendations for future marketing plans | | To test and refine marketing strategies, discard failed attempts | Focus on channels that work best, identify new/innovative ones | TS/NR/MNC | X | X | X | X |

# Annex 2:

# What's in a Press Kit and Press Release?

## I. WHAT'S IN A PRESS KIT?

When preparing a press kit make sure to include all of the following items:

- Your business card
- Fact sheet with basic info: one page (preferably), a maximum of two pages.
- Your brochure if available
- List of clients/ partners
- Your press release
- A page of client testimonials
- Reprints of magazine articles about your services
- Photos

## II. WHAT'S IN A PRESS RELEASE?

The press release should include the following elements:

- Current date
- Date for release
- Contact info of the person who prepared the release or the marketing manager
- Headline
- Introduction (1st paragraph & summary – basic facts)
- Body: make sure it is newsworthy
- Closing: restate the main point or news, tie it to the headline.